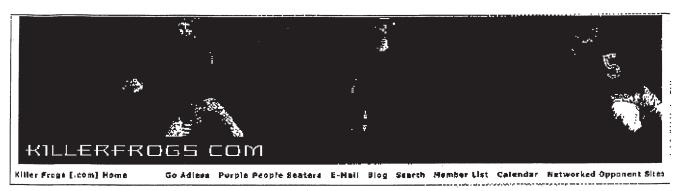
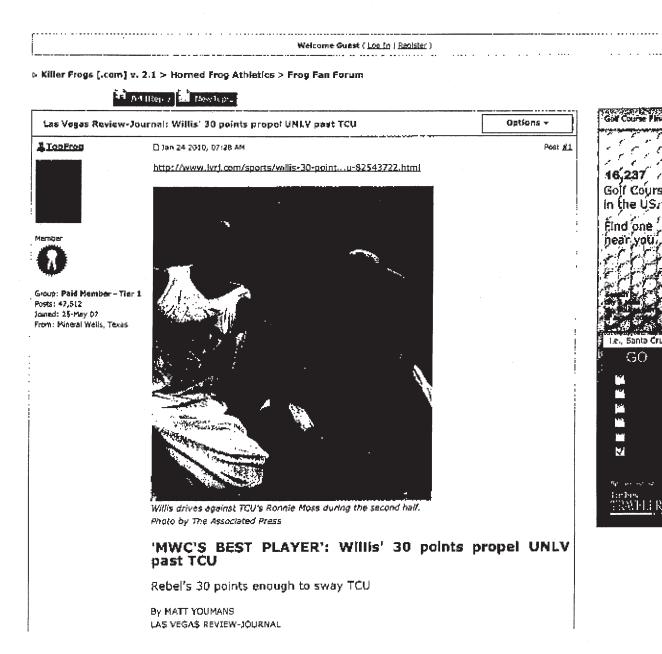
Las Vegas Review-Journal: Willis' 30 points propel UNLV past TCU - Killer Frogs [.com... Page 1 of 4







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FORT WORTH, Texas -- It took some time for Fre'Yon Willis to show it, but what he's doing now it what he shows expected. Never has the UNLV junior guard played better basketball.

His immense scoring abilities are no longer a secret, and he's collecting admirers around the Mountain West Conference.

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Willis scored a career-high 30 points and sophomore forward Chate Stanback tied his career high with 19, carrying the Rebels to a 79-70 victory over the Homed Frogs on Saturday.

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Willis' 13 points pushed the Rebels to a 38-30 halftime lead, but they were unable to run away with the game. The Homed Frogs fought back to tie the score at 60 on Ronnle Moss' three-point play with 8:35 remaining.

Stanback and Willis strung together the next nine points, with Will's' only 3-pointer putting UNLV up 69-60 with 4:30 left.

"The defense has got to pick their poison a little bit and either focus on one or focus on Chace," said Willis, who shot 9-for-14 from the field and 11-for-14 on free throws.

After Willis missed two free throws, Zvonko Buljan's layup pulled TCU to within 72-70 with 1:05 remaining, inciting the crowd of 4,270 at Daniel-Meyer Colliseum. Willis was fouled on a drive and made two free throws with 50 seconds left.

Stanback then quieted the crowd. He stole a pass, was fouled by Buljan and made two free throws with 35 seconds left to make the score 76-70. Stanback shot 8-for-12 and matched his 19 points in the Rebels' victory at Colorado State on Wednesday.

Willis became the first UNLV player to register a 30-point game since Wink Adams scored 33 in a victory against Wyoming on Jan. 23, 2008.

"It's great to see Tre and Chate do what they're doing," Rebels coach Lon Kruger said. "Tre just played at a great pace. He was not rushing anything.

"I like what he's doing right now. His game continues to mature. He's playing with such a high level of confidence, he's hard to guard."

The 6-foot-4-Inch Willis used his size and strength to drive by and shoot over an assortment of TCU defenders, most often the 6-2 Moss and 6-2 Xavier Roberson.

"I was getting the ball in the 15-, 16-foot range with smaller defenders on me," said Willis, who also had six rebounds and four assists. "I had a lot of one-on-one situations, and I tried to take advantage of that."

UNLY was able to exploit mismatches all over the floor en route to shootlag a season-high 59.2 percent (29-for-49). Willis was the offense's impetus.

"He's such a hard matchup because he's got great size, he can post, he can shoot 3s, he drives the ball and he's hard to foul," Christian said.

Willis was limited to 1.1 points last January, when UNLV was upset 80-73 by the Horned Frogs in Fort Worth

"We came into this building last year and went home disappointed," Willis said. "We knew this was a big game."

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Las Vegas Review-Journal: Willis' 30 points propel UNLV past TCU - Killer Frogs [.com... Page 3 of 4

Nikola Cerlna led the Horned Frogs (10-10, 2-3) with 14 points. Buljan and Greg Hill each scored 13 for TCU, which stock close by hitting 11 of 27 3-pointers.

The Rebels also showed off a stronger inside presence, as big men Matt Shaw, Brice Massamba and Darris Santee combined for 22 points on 9-for-10 shooting.

Kruger started Massamba in place of Shaw, who came off the beach for the first time since Oec. ; 12. Shaw made 2 of 3 3 pointers and finished with 10 points.

Contact reporter Matt Youmans at myodmans@reviewjournal.com or 702-387-2907.

UNLY 79 Texas Christian 70

UNLY MIN FG-A FT-A R A PF TP

Stanback 26 8-12 2-2 4 1 1 19 Massamba 16 2-2 2-2 0 0 3 6 Belmeid 33 1-4 1-1 1 5 1 3 Jasper 27 2-3 1-2 9 2 2 5 Willis 31 9-14 11-14 6 4 2 30 Wallace 22 0-5 0-0 0 0 1 0 Marshall 10 0-0 0-0 3 4 1 0 Jones 6 0-0 0-0 2 0 0 0 Hawkins 6 0-1 0-0 0 0 1 0 Shaw 9 4-5 0-0 1 0 2 10 Santee 14 3-3 0-0 2 0 2 6

TOTALS 200 29-49 17-21 29 16 16 79

Three-point goals--4-15, .267 (Shaw 2-3, Stanback 1-3, Willis 1-4, Bellfield 0-1, Wallace 0-4). Field goals--59.2%. Free throws--81.0%. Team rebounds--1. Blocked shots--2 (Bellfield, Willis). Turnovers--12 (Bellfield 3, Santee 2, Willis 2, Wallace, Marshall, Jasper, Jones, Stanback). Steals--3 (Jasper, Hawkins, Willis).

TOU MIN FG-A FT-A R A PF TP

Buljan 36 4-10 4-4 5 4 3 13 Cerina 31 4-7 6-11 2 0 3 14 Moss 37 3-8 1-1 4 5 2 9 Ruzgas 28 3-6 2-2 1 0 0 11 Mitchem 20 0-2 0-0 3 2 1 0 Roberson 18 2-4 0-0 1 1 5 6 Butter 12 2-2 0-0 3 0 1 4 HIII 18 4-9 2-3 1 0 3 13

TOTALS 200 22-48 15-21 23 13 18 70

Field goals--45.8%. Free throws--71,4%.

Three-point goals--11-27, .407 (Ruzgas 3-5, Hill 3-7, Roberson 2-3, Moss 2-6, Buljan 1-4, Mitchem 0-1). Team rebounds--3. Blocked shots--1 (Moss). Turnovers--11 (Moss 4, Cerina 2, Buljan, Butler, Hill, Ruzgas, Mitchem). Steals--5 (Buljan 2, Roberson, Hill, Mitchem).

A--4,270. Officials--Rick Batsell, Lonnie Dixon, Duane Allen. Technical fouls--None.

UNLV 38 41 -- 79 Texas Christian 30 40 -- 70

Hey Dutch, I brought my skates!

^{*}FOOTBALL . i6 # game played by MEN! Not a bunch of Jamin's sales and city stickers from Dalbis!" - Den Jankins, from the book "When the Arags Were Princes"

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Las Vegas Review Journal: Oddsmakers wary of siding with favored Mountain West teams

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MATT YOUMANS: Oddsmakers wary of siding with favored Mountain West teams

When he was washing dishes at a seafood restaurant five years ago, Anthony Johnson was an unlikely candidate to play a starring role in this NCAA Tournament. But his story is not a fish tale.

Johnson will lead Montana against New Mexico in an East Region first-round game on Thursday. Predictably, the Grizzlies are underdogs. Don't count them out, though.

"Montana is a 'dog that I think has a good chance," Las Vegas Sports Consultants oddsmaker Ken White said.

In the Big Sky Conference title game, Johnson, a senior guard, scored 34 of his 42 points in the second half as the Grizzlies overcame a 20-point deficit to beat Weber State, 66-65. More on Johnson later.

New Mexico is one of a record four Mountain West Conference teams to make the NCAA's 65-team field. Two of those teams are favorites.

LVSC opened the Lobos as 10-point favorites over Montana, and the line dropped to 9 on Sunday night, when the sharpest bettors were picking off what they perceived to be the best numbers.

Brigham Young, carried by sharp-shooting guard Jimmer Fredette, opened as a 3½-point favorite over Florida. The Cougars struggled to beat Texas Christian in the MWC tournament before falling to UNLV in the semifinals.

White said the Gators, who survived the NCAA bubble, are quicker, more athletic and capable of a minor upset.

"BYU just didn't impress me against TCU and UNLV. If you can put some pressure on Jimmer, they could be in trouble because they don't have a real strong No. 2 scorer," White said. "I think Florida has got a great shot to win that game."

Fredette was phenomenal last week in Las Vegas, scoring a total of 75 points in two games. But

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New Mexico was not at its best, barely holding off Air Force and losing to San Diego State.

The Aztecs, whose No. 11 seed was lower than expected, are $3\frac{1}{2}$ -point underdogs to Tennessee. LVSC opened the Rebels as $1\frac{1}{2}$ -point underdogs to Northern Iowa, but the Las Vegas Hilton and MGM Mirage sports books posted the line at pick'em.

The wrong team might have opened as the favorite in the Gonzaga-Florida State game. LVSC opened the Bulldogs minus-1½, but the line shifted to the Seminoles' side (-1) at the Hilton.

"I think Florida State, which has got far superior athletes, is going to end up being the favorite," White said. "The Zags, as I've said most of the year, they're not as good as people think."

How good is Purdue without injured forward Robbie Hummel, the team's most valuable player?

Greg Anthony, a CBS analyst and former UNLV star, made this Las Vegas-themed statement when the brackets were unveiled: "Could we possibly have a scenario where a 13 seed is favored over a 4 seed?"

But the Boilermakers, who have won 11 consecutive NCAA first-round games, opened as 4-point favorites over Siena. When various TV analysts made predictions, the Saints were a popular upset nick

"That's going to be an interesting game because I'm sure Purdue, which is getting no respect, is going to be ready to play," White said. "They are a lame-duck team because they lost Hummel, but that's still a really talented team."

Butler, a No. 5 seed, is favored by just $2\frac{1}{2}$ points over Texas-El Paso, but White made the line 5.

The Bulldogs, 28-4 and 18-0 in the Horizon League, boast four double-digit scorers in Gordon Hayward, Shelvin Mack, Matt Howard and Willie Veasley. The Miners are led by high-scoring guard Randy Culpepper and forward Derrick Caracter.

"I do like Butler. That's the kind of team you want to bet on," White said. "I love their frontcourt with Howard and Hayward."

In another intriguing matchup, White gives Oklahoma State, a 1-point favorite over Georgia Tech, a slight nod

"I thought Oklahoma State has the edge just because of James Anderson, the best player on the court," White said.

Three more underdogs to watch, White said, are Morgan State (+17%) against West Virginia, Oakland (+10%) against Pittsburgh and Wofford (+10) against Wisconsin.

And don't forget about Montana and its unlikely star.

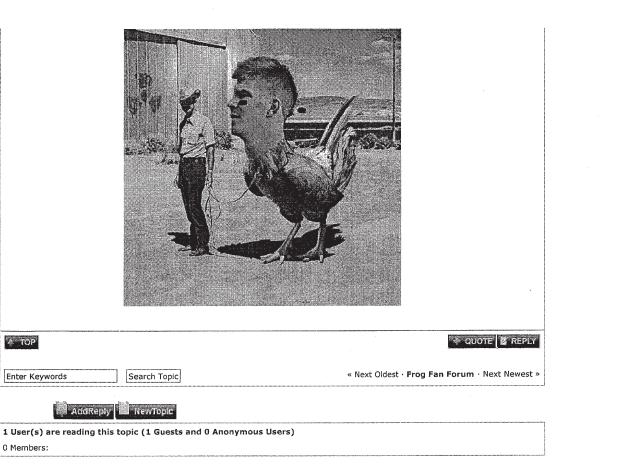
Johnson was washing dishes and saving money to buy a car in 2005, when his future wife lobbied to get him a junior-college tryout. He already has made a great underdog story, and it could get heter.

Contact Las Vegas Review-Journal sports betting columnist Matt Youmans at myoumans@reviewjournal.com or 702-387-2907.

Hey Dutch, I brought my skates!

2/2//2010

[&]quot;FOOTBAL... is a game played by MENi Not a bunch of damn sissies and city slickers from Dallast"
- Dan Jenkins, from the book "When the Frogs Were Princes."



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Willis' high output nets lofty praise

Matt Youmans

By MATT YOUMANS

LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

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